Distilled Kabbalah

- John Ruf -

Warnings

“That which is learned cannot easily be unlearned.” — Anonymous

Heed the above warning. You may think such a warning is trifling when we are only dealing with words, but you must understand that words express some concepts better than others. Take, for example, the concepts expressed in science: benign in some respects, powerful in others. These concepts, expressed through science, led to the atomic bomb and space travel. Now that the Pandora’s Box of atomic energy has been opened, it cannot be easily closed just as a great imagination cannot be stifled when interstellar travel seems so tantalizingly close.

Concepts feed us—they make us what we are, and instill in us the dreams of what we will become. Learning an engaging, actionable, and, most importantly, true concept can have a profound effect on the structure of your mind. The concepts you

learn can and will change your future. Ultimately, what you choose to believe and internalize is exactly that: a choice. Be aware that the contents of this essay may radically shift your point of view. The choice to continue is solely up to you.

Being introduced to radically different concepts than you are used to can have a profound effect on your psyche. Kabbalah fundamentals are certainly not your everyday viewpoints. As a set, they represent a radical shift of worldview for most individuals. This shift, should it occur, has a fundamental effect on baseline beliefs, and change radiates out into how you interact with the world and how you relate to yourself. These changes can be positive yet painful.

Uprooting your foundational viewpoints has a tendency to produce significant change. Change by nature is painful to experience. The more adjusted to change you are, the easier change is to accept. Change is instinctive. Change is constant. Change is our very existence. Fear and resistance to change only hinders our enjoyment of this existence.

My second warning: don't get lost in the stars. Focusing on what we perceive to be the mundane is ultimately more important and productive than trying to understand what we perceive to be hidden secrets of the universe. Enlightenment, joy, peace, and bliss are not places we arrive at; rather, they are states of being that exist solely in the present. Trying to get to a state is a state in of itself. Sometimes it is best to relax and trust that the universe is unfolding exactly as you truly need it to. Don't be afraid to take time to savor and contemplate what has been given to you in the present moment.

Kabbalah ideals are not overly complex, but at the same time they are not easy to digest. Be aware that the more convoluted an idea is, the more likely that it is wrong.

Basic Concept

All that we experience is one thing expressing itself through multiplicity. There is no other thing than the one thing. Nothing exists inside or outside of it because it is one thing and only one thing. It is living consciousness expressing itself as individual elements. All that you experience, all existence, is ultimately one thing.

That thing is pure consciousness. All that we experience is consciousness. All that we experience might not necessarily express intelligence, but all things are expressions of awareness. This consciousness is available for us to use as individuals. We use this consciousness best when we are able to individually apply it to our lives, much like the tools of a trade. Accessing this intellect becomes easier with effort, time, and practice. Over time, the outcome of this interaction falls more in line with our individual sense of rightness.

As if part of a larger organism, we are workers within the manifestation of light. Our task is both simple and complex: it is to be, it is to choose, and it is to create. Reality exists for us to shape, to discover, and to understand. We are not complete in of ourselves for we are only a subset of the one thing.

Imagine a pure bright light. Now imagine a green cloth was put between you and the light's source—suddenly the appearance of the light changes. So it is with us and the one thing. Imagine the one thing as a source of light. Where we exist is where light has been infinitely filtered and slowed to a frequency so that it becomes solid matter.

Imagine this light is yet to be manifested: it is comprised of potential, pure consciousness, and unparalleled awareness. As ideas form in any conscious being, they radiate from this source. Filters are applied to these ideas, which slow them to the frequency of the physical. This is the kabbalistic ideal that the physical world is only a projection of consciousness.

As a kabbalist, one of our life goals is to form a union of our consciousness with the universal consciousness. This event, when it occurs, is marked by a significant positive change in the individual's inner life, attitudes, and circumstances. It is denoted by peace, understanding, and empowerment. It can take decades from the start of your studies to realize this goal, but the journey is worth it.

As individuals, we are not a representation of all awareness but are a subset of awareness. We have access to everything via conscious awareness, but this access is always limited by our own ability. Perhaps someday, through the evolution of our individual identity, we will come to a greater if not holistic awareness of the all. There exists an idea that we all really share one mind with which we process the experience of life.

Perhaps there is no external God. Consider instead that all things are an expression of God. There is no separation. God, if such a thing exists, is the one thing expressed as multiplicity, which means that everything you might perceive as good or evil is an

expression of a single entity whose sense of morality does not match our own limited view.

Basic Principles

The principle of attraction states *that which we think attracts and eventually manifests*. The origin of all things exists as consciousness. As we think, we create for our neighbors and ourselves that which we believe and accept as truth. The overall strength of the aggregated belief plays into the resulting experience for our individual selves.

The principle of rhythm states *that there is a rhythm to everything*. Everything has a season; everything has an ebb and flow. Everything is cyclical. Happiness flows into sadness and back again. Change is constant in our experience, but follows a pattern like a sound wave. This rhythm occurs across all axes of polarity. No matter where you are or what you are experiencing, you will move up or down the spectrum and back again in a relatively short time.

The principle of polarity states *that there is a polarity to everything yet the idea* expressed

amounts to one thing. Two sides of the same coin if you will. Happiness and sadness are forever entwined as one thing. One does not exist as separate from the other. All emotions, thoughts, and experiences have an equal and opposite polarity. In this manner we can see that the concept of polarity is a root concept and a fundamental law of our experience.

The principle of vibration states *that everything has a frequency of vibration*. Everything in this experience is in motion. Everything oscillates and this gives rise to the fact that everything has a frequency. If you wish to draw something towards yourself, try tuning your entire being to the frequency of the thing you seek. If you wish to push something away from you, try tuning out of the frequency or tuning into the opposite polarity of the concept.

By experimentation and through thought alone can we test and validate the basic principles of hermetic kabalistic wisdom. You can begin to see as fact that the cause of all things originates from consciousness. We are that which we choose to think, and thought alone has a profound effect on our

experience and the experience of others. We must be careful gardeners of our mental garden, for our own sake and that of others.

Tree of Life

The Tree of Life is a map of sorts that shows how conscious potential flows into physical form. Though each of the ten sephirots and the twenty-two connecting paths, unrealized potential becomes physical reality. This unrealized potential flows into physical reality and is guided by interacting with conscious awareness. What is conceptualized eventually becomes a physical reality, though not always how we as individuals believe it to be. As humans, we exert minute control over the meta of this reality and create our circumstance on this planet.

The Tree of Life is expressed as four levels of consciousness. The first level of consciousness closest to our physical manifestation of potential is called Nefesh. When we dwell in Nefesh, we are primary focused on the physical and on fulfilling our basic instinct for safety and security. We tend not to look internally, but rather we use logic and reason to analyze the world external to us.

The second level of consciousness is called Ruach, which is when an individual begins to apply logic and reason to what happens internally. Ruach becomes marked by increased emotional awareness and empathy for the lives of others. It is here we begin to meet and understand our authentic self.

The third level of consciousness is called Neshama, which is marked by an intellectual understanding of what happens internally. Here, not only are we aware of the internal, but also we are able to describe its workings and convey it with language to others. It is at this level that we begin to help in the lives of others. This work becomes significantly easier the more one is able to intellectualize and internalize that which is learned through observing the internal workings.

The fourth level of consciousness is Chaya, which is referred to as enlightenment or illumination. Illumination is my preferred term. When you become filled with inner light, the journey is not at an end, but is simply the beginning of a different type of journey. It is the responsibility of those at

this level to draw even greater amounts of light within themselves and distribute it among those that surround them. Here the inner guru becomes the teacher. While knowledge may be obtained in many ways, the greatest and most useful knowledge will come from within.

The Tree of Life also expresses the three stages of self-evolution. The first stage is referred to as the initiate phase, which begins when the individual turns inward from the physical and expresses a desire to know the self and truth. In this stage, you begin to observe the internal and change the patterns that direct your life. Whether the initiate is conscious of this work or not, it nevertheless persists. Sometimes it is present in conscious thought, other times it is worked out by the subconscious mind.

Inevitably, after you become an initiate you find yourself at the adept stage. The individual finds him or herself thinking in terms of others instead of in terms of the self. There is a greater desire to make life better for the self and others. They begin to understand and internalize the concepts discovered in the initiate phase. An adept

begins with the desire to know non-duality of self and ends when such a thing is found. In doing so, the adept learns to become authentic and find the source of his or her authentic self.

Soon you may find yourself transitioning to the archetype of a magus where you can live authentically. Magi are highly moral and ethical in their approach to their own lives. They are also amoral in terms of the lives of others. You will find that everything becomes a matter of perspective, and that interfering or guiding the lives of others always comes with a cost. Regardless of the risk, magi will find themselves actively helping others achieve self-realization. The illuminated naturally and instinctively improves the lives of those around them. Moreover, they attract those that are ready for elevation.

Path of the Kabbalist

The Tree of Life also provides two path for returning to that source. The easiest path of return is to quickly ascend but lose all sense of individuality. The path of the kabbalist is the path of return that maintains a sense of self. The return to the source is marked by bliss, peace, and understanding. While the path of the kabbalist is longer and more difficult, it is worth the extra effort.

The path of the kabbalist is defined by an ethical life. It would be difficult to tread this path and be anything but ethical. However, it is a difficult path to walk. You must dedicate your life to constant learning and constantly being tested. You should seek to be polished like a mirror and to reflect and amplify as much light as possible. A kabbalist lives a life devoted to the internal over the external. Not many are ready to turn inward to the source of all things.

Many skills are required of the kabbalist. Fortunately, they require nothing but your time and attention. They are simple and

complex, and these techniques have been used since the dawn of man and cross various traditions of magic, theology, yoga, and philosophy.

Contemplation is an important foundational skill for a kabbalist. To begin contemplation, you direct your thoughts at a subject of concentration for an extended period of time. If you are just beginning, this process will take practice and delivers invaluable insights. At first your mind may wander. If it does, gently bring your mind back to the subject of your concentration. This method will reveal opportunity and paths that you might not have otherwise realized are available to you.

One of contemplation's greatest applications for me has been to help in resolving painful past memories and other mental blockages. It is an easy foundational practice for a beginner to pick up and quickly deliver actionable results.

You should meditate to become more aware of the inner landscape that always dwells within you. It is to seek out your true authentic self. Meditation is to become more

aware of the sensation of life that surrounds you at any given time. It is to find the power of silence and to learn to control the chatter of the mind. Meditation does not have to be difficult or special to be effective

Creative visualization, also referred to as magic, is simply that. Belief combined with imagery and imbued with emotion. All that magic is can be confined to the contents of the imagination. Learning to visualize is a critical task for any kabbalist. One must be able to visualize detail and color as well as sensation, sound, and smell. As a kabbalist, you must build a visual lexicon of your own creation. It is helpful to start with basic shapes and imbue them with emotion and desire.

Recommended Reading

“Whether you own it or not, your destiny has always been your own to control. It can belong to no other.” -Anonymous

If you want to begin your practice:

- *Three Magic Words* by US Andersen
- *Meditation: The First and Last Freedom* by Osho
- *The Kybalion* by The Three Initiates
- *21st Century Mage: Bring the Divine Down to Earth* by Jason Augustus Newcomb

If you would like to supplement your practice:

- *Essential NLP: Teach Yourself* by Amanda Vickers
- *Simplified Qabala Magic* by Ted Andrews
- *The New Hermetics: 21st Century Magick for Illumination and Power* by Jason Augustus Newcomb

If you would like to deepen your practice:

- *A Bardon Companion* by Rawn Clark
- *The Eight Temples Meditation Project* by Rawn Clark
- *Brain Magick: Exercises in Meta-Magick and Invocation* by Philip H. Farber